

Education Committee  
State of Connecticut  
Hartford, Connecticut

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Dear Education Committee,

Please include this letter as part of the official comments on the teacher certification issue.

We ACES ECA parents are writing about the Commissioner of Education's proposal that all part-time instructors in Connecticut become certified. We are adamantly opposed to this proposal.

The proposal, should it become effective, would destroy the ACES ECA program. ACES ECA students, representing 18 different school districts of diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds is taught by highly-specialized, extensively-trained professional artist/teachers who are recognized as outstanding in their fields. This group of artist teachers is responsible for the school's 35-year record of success, including a graduation rate significantly higher than the Connecticut average. Their training includes advanced degrees at the masters and Ph.D. levels, and many are concurrently teaching at colleges like Wesleyan, Sarah Lawrence, and Yale. In addition they are practicing artists, musicians, playwrights and dancers. These dedicated teachers who give so much of themselves to our children would not be able to incur the additional time and expense required to become certified, even in the ARC program, and if required to do so (for part-time positions that offer no benefits), they would regretfully be forced to leave their jobs at ECA.

Frankly were this to occur, there would not be teachers available to hire who would be both certified and, simultaneously, practicing professional artists with college-teaching experience, as required to fulfill the mission of ECA. The end result of the Commissioner's proposal is that the school would close.

The destruction of a school, already taught by the most highly qualified teachers, in the name of brining in certified teachers would be a tragedy. This program is special and unique. The young artist students thrive under the outstanding teaching of this extraordinary group. Please do not allow ECA to be destroyed!

Other states have found creative solutions to this problem. The state of Kentucky allows for a waiver of certification requirements for adjunct faculty; the state of New York allows for permits (see <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/typesofcerts.htm>). **The alternative of providing a permit to the part-time professionals at ECA, rather than requiring certification, would be the**

**solution that would best enable the school to continue with its current roster of extraordinary teachers.**

The Commissioner's present certification requirement would make it impossible to sustain a program that is inspiring our children and readying them for our competitive global economy, at the same time that it is fostering their admissions and scholarships to the best post-secondary conservatories and universities. We cannot afford for such a compromise in the education of our children to occur.

Please protect ECA.

Sincerely yours,  
Jim Horwitz  
Sandy Allison